

At the Los Angeles County Fair

there is a lion who waits through the races to
perform at night
in front of the grandstand. He has the only shade around
and he lies in the shadows

while the bettors in the infield and the horses on the
track circle around him.
I look forward to seeing the lion every September during
the short racing season out there.
When I stand by his cage to read the Racing Form my luck
seems to improve,

if only a little, and that is a comforting thought in the
spring when betting is precarious
and the fillies and mares are not thinking about running
but of enormous, haunchy stallions.

Once in 1966, after a fine day, I successfully resisted
the temptation to
smuggle in some delicacy for the lion. I have always been
glad that I did not do that.
From the beginning our relationship has been without
sentimentality or need for
compensation. It has been as clean as his sharp, white
teeth.

Yesterday when the fair opened for the new season I drove
out and the lion was
nowhere to be found. And though I asked anyone who would
listen to me, no one in the circus nor
any of the fair officials seemed to know anything about it.

Things They Don't Tell You in History Class

The name, for example, of the
man who first used the phrase,
"The only good indian is a dead
indian."

He was called Oklahoma Charlie,
a little-known scout for the
Army who was -- besides being a
necrophiliac -- was queer as a
three dollar bill.

Live and learn.

-- Ronald Koertge

Pasadena, Calif.